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NOTES ON CALIFORNIA FOLK-LORE.¹

TRADITION FORMERLY OBTAINED AT CHICO.

THE Indians formerly living along the bank of Chico Creek made frequent excursions southwestward into the Sacramento valley for the purpose of gathering acorns, fishing, and hunting jackrabbits. At one time they were camped not far from a lake, which was a few miles from where the little town of Grainland is now located. A single tree stood near the bank of the lake. A young man was sent to the lake with a basket to bring water. He did not return. After a time the people, thinking he had forgotten his errand, sent another man. He also failed to return. Alarmed at the disappearance of these two men, the people held a council. It was decided to send a third man for water and with him another to watch and discover if possible what had befallen the two who had previously gone. Two men were selected and went to the lake. The watcher cautiously approached and climbed into the tree near the lake. Seated upon a branch overlooking the lake, he saw his companion wade out into the water. Suddenly there arose from the water a beautiful woman, who wound her arms around the man and drew him down. In fear the watcher descended from the tree, hurried to the camp, and brought the news, whereupon the band immediately left the vicinity. Since that time none of these people have approached the lake.

A GHOST DANCE ON THE KLAMATH RIVER.

During the Modoc war many Indians from the rancherias along the Klamath River were gathered at Happy Camp in Siskiyou County dancing nightly. When questioned by the white inhabitants, who had become alarmed, the Indians stated that a medicine-man had predicted that if the people would gather and dance, a new river would open up, carry away the whites, and bring back alive all dead Indians, each with a pair of white blankets.

The following episode is related in connection with this dance. When the Indians averred that the bringing to life of the dead and the destruction of the whites would be accomplished only by their dancing, and not by violence, the whites demanded and enforced as a guarantee of peace the surrender of the arms in their possession. A year or two later a ball was held at Happy Camp on the fourth of July. During its progress a number of Indians appeared, demanded a conference, and alleged their fear of the purpose of the dance. They stated that they would be convinced of the good faith of the whites

¹ This paper has been communicated as part of the Proceedings of the California Branch of the American Folk-Lore Society.

only by the surrender of arms. An armful of old guns was thereupon gathered and given to the Indians, who departed with apparent satisfaction.

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Through Rev. W. A. Brewer, San Mateo.

YOKUTS NAMES

In aboriginal California, as everywhere farther north on the Pacific coast and among the tribes of many other regions of America, the custom of not mentioning under any circumstances the name of a dead person was very deep-seated. Among the southern Yokuts of the upper end of the San Joaquin valley, to-day represented principally by the survivors of the Yaudanchi and Yauelmani tribes on Tule River Reservation, this feeling led to a peculiar development. Every person ordinarily had two names. Only one of these might be in ordinary use. The second, however, was employed as a reserve in case the death of a namesake, in the same or a neighboring tribe, tabooed the first. Children are said to have received their two names at the same time. New names were not usual, children being named generally after a dead grandfather, uncle, or other relative. Sometimes the names of living relatives were also used. This is proved by the case of a woman, alive a few years ago, who had lost both her names because her brother's daughters had died. A person who had thus lost both his names through the death of others was called "no name," *kamun hoyowoc*. In default of a name, such a person would, if necessary, be addressed by this term "no name." A namesake was called simply "my name," and this term also would be used in address. Of a person who had lost one of his names through the death of another it would be said: *tawitji an yet hoyowosh*, "died his one name." Men's and women's names were distinct. Many names had no known significance, but others denoted animals, objects, actions, sounds, or tribes. A list of men's and women's names from Tule River follows: —

Men:

- Tanka, buzzard; second name, *K'aushash*, cracking or tapping.
- Djichpu; second name, *Sokhusha*. The latter is also the name of a man living in one of the tribes north of Tule River.
- Bikh, denoting an action peculiar to a dog; second name, *Saunama*.
- Putut, make fire; second name, *Koku*.
- Seli, see, from *sil*; second name, *Dumash*.
- Kukuya, the cry of the mountain quail.
- Djemshak.
- Tukchuchu.

Gawu, pronounced Cow by the whites.

Hawasya.

Watokai, from watak, pine nut. Also the name of a man of the Tachi tribe.

Nahaach, otter.

Pitkachi, the name of a tribe on the San Joaquin River, was the name of an old man, now dead, on Tule River Reservation.

Taucha, dead, is the name of an Indian among the Gashowu, now near the San Joaquin River.

Women :

Wiamcha ; second name, Dewat.

Wawachik.

Ilat.

Omom.

Yaudach. This name may be related to yawud, brush, or to the tribal name Yaudanchi.

The reason of the strict taboo of the names of the dead has not yet become clear. It is as with most customs : explanations can frequently not be given for them by the people observing them. It is probable that in many cases fear of the dead had some connection with the name-taboo. In some parts of California it is thought that the mention of a dead person, especially if he is recently deceased, is likely to bring about the return of his ghost with evil consequences for those visited. This definite explanation will, however, not hold everywhere. The Yokuts say that they are not influenced by any such belief. The only explanation they that can give for their observance of the custom is that the mention of the name causes the relatives of the dead person great grief. This is a motive which is undoubtedly present in the minds of all the Indians of California, whether or not they are in addition actuated by feelings of fear connected with the possible return of the dead. It was usual everywhere to obliterate in every way the memory of the dead as much as possible, especially by the destruction or removal of objects specifically associated with him. The house in which he lived was in many regions burned, destroyed, or abandoned. It soon becomes very evident to any one dealing with the California Indians that mention of their dead relatives and friends usually causes them acute grief, especially among the older people, and that, when they have reason to believe the mention to be deliberate and not made through ignorance, it is received as a deep affront. Among some tribes the greatest insult one person could inflict upon another was to speak of the latter's dead relatives, especially to mention them by name. In northwestern California such a mention, even if accidental, could only be compensated by a considerable payment.

A. L. Kroeber.

CUSTOMS OF THE INDIANS OF WESTERN TEHAMA COUNTY.

The Indians of western Tehama County, who belong to the Wintun family and call themselves Nomlaki, "western talk," were very precise in many of their burial customs. The highest ambition of a person about to die, was to have a black bearskin for a shroud. The skin must be black, and must be perfect as regards eyebrows, whiskers, and claws. Forty years ago, a trader sold such a bearskin to an Indian of this region for commodities to the value of one hundred dollars. Soon after acquiring this skin the Indian died and was buried in it. Next to a skin of a black bear were esteemed skins of the brown or cinnamon bear, the grizzly, and the panther, in the order named.

At death, before the body had time to become rigid, the knees were drawn up to the chin and the entire body lashed and wound about with a rope of a particular fineness specially made and kept for the purpose. The body was buried in a hole with a small mound raised over it and a flat rock on top. The burial grounds were usually at some distance from the village.

There were certain customs regarding the use of food that were rigorously observed. As a boy, I once bought pine nuts from an Indian, and a convenient log being at hand, began to crack the nuts on this log. The Indian at once begged me to stop, saying that if the nuts were cracked on a log, he or another person next climbing a tree for nuts would fall. If the nuts were cracked on a stone, there would be no danger.

The Indians were much afraid of ghosts, whom they called simply "dead persons." Sight of a ghost was likely to cause death. In my experience an Indian who had gone into the mountains to gather pine nuts came back very ill, believing he had seen a ghost, and died within a few days.

One of the most striking peculiarities of the speech of these Indians was the frequency with which they used the four cardinal points in ordinary conversation. An object would not be mentioned as being at a person's back, or at his right hand, as we should say, but to the north or south or east or west of him. "It is standing south of you," "Hang this up west of the door," and similar phrases would be used where we should say: "It is standing behind you," or "Hang it up to the right of the door." In describing the location of an object in the country or a way that had been taken, the same four terms, together with "up" and "down" were almost exclusively used, and by the aid of such directions an Indian could almost infallibly reach any desired point.

F. B. Washington.